THE \$1,000,000.00 MYSTERY

(By Harold McGrath) NINTH EPISODE

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and they've kidnaped her right under your nose! What was the number of

"Cut out that line of talk, young fellah; I know my business. They had

the proper documents." "But you hadn't brains enough to inquire whether they were genuine or not! You wait!" shrilled the chauffeur. "I'll have you broken for this work." He wheeled and ran back to his car, to find Susan and the countess in a great state of agitation. "They got her, they got her! And I swore on the book that they never should, so

long as I drove the car." Susan wept, and the countess tried

in vain to console her. And when Jones was informed he frightened even the countess with the snarl of rage which burned across his lips. He tore into the hall, seized his hat, and was gone. Not a word of reproach did he offer to the chauffeur.



Braine and the Countess.

He understood that no one is infallible. He found the blundering policeman, who now realized that he stood in for scription of the man and woman. Word | ing in midair, as at the moment there was sent broadcast through the city. The police had to be informed this

Late in the day an officer whose beat included the ferry landing at Hoboken said he had seen the three. Everything had looked all right to him. It was the motherly face of the one and the benign countenance of the other that had blinded him.

At midnight Jones, haggard and with the air of one beaten, returned

"No wireless yet?" asked Norton. "The George Washington of the North German Lloyd does not answer. Something has happened to her wires; tampered with, possibly."

"So long as we know they are at sea, we can remedy the evil. They will not be able to land at a single port. I have sent ten cables. They can't get away from the wire. If I could only get hold of the names of those damnable doctors who signed that document! Twenty years."

Jones bent his head in his hands, and Norton tramped the floor till the sound of his footsteps threatened to drive the moaning Susan into hys-

"It is only a matter of a few days." "But can the child stand the terrors?" questioned Jones. "Who knows that they may not really drive her in-

On board the George Washington every one felt extremely sorry for this beautiful girl. It was a frightful misfortune to be so stricken at her age. "She is certainly insane," said one

of the passengers, who had known

Hargreave slightly through some banking business. "Hargreave wasn't married. He lived alone."

After the second day out Florence was permitted to wander about the ship as she pleased. A good many of the passengers were

mightily worried when they learned that the wireless had in some mysterious way been tampered with after the boat had made the open sea. It was impossible to put about. The apparatus must be fixed at sea.

And when finally Norton's wireless caught the wires of the George Washington he was gravely informed that the young lady referred to had leaped the rail off the Banks at night and had been drowned. She had not been missed till the following morning.

CHAPTER X.

The Past a Blank.

It was perfectly true that Florence had cast herself into the sea. It had not been an act of deepair, however. On the contrary, hope and courage had prompted her to leap. The night was clear, with only a moderate sea running. At the time the great ship was passing the banks, and almost within hail she saw a fishing schooner riding gracefully at anchor. She quite readily believed that if she remained on board the George Washington she was lost. She naturally forgot the marvel of wireless telegraphy. No longer may

So, with that quick thought which propellers tossed her about, hither

grew blank.

Fortunately for her the master of the fishing schooner was at the time standing on his quarterdeck by the wheel, squinting through his glass at comfort of those on board her. The mate, sitting on the steps and smoking his turning-in pipe, saw the master lean forward suddenly, lower the glass, then raise it again.

"Lord a'mighty!" "What's the matter, cap'n?" "Jake, in God's name, come 'ere an' take a peek through this glass. I'm

dreamin'!' The mate jumped and took the glass. "Where away, sir?" "A p'int off th' sta'board bow. See

somethin' white bobbin' up?" "Yessir! Looks like some one

"Then I ain't really seein' things," cried the master. "Hi, y' lubbers!" he yelled to the crew; "lower th' dory. Sharp's th' word! Mate, you go t' do."

The crew dropped their tasks and sprang for the davits, and the starboard dory was lowered in shipshape same time. It will be many days be-

It takes a good bit of seamanship bottomless pit. They were very ten- notify you." der with her. They laid her out in the bottom of the boat, with the life buoy as a pillow, and pulled energetically not think to glance over the old ones. for the schooner. She was alive, because she breathed; but she did not stir so much as an eyelid. It was a stiff about it and strolled out to the Barnes' bit of work, too, to land her aboard cottage to satisfy their curiosity. One without adding to her injuries. The thing was certain to their simple master ordered the men to put her in minds: some day Barnes would get a his own bunk, where he nearly stran- great sum of money for his kindness. gled her by forcing raw brandy down They had read about such things in her throat.

"Well, she's alive, anyhow." When Florence finally opened her eyes the gray of dawn lay on the sea, a fleet. was visible to the eye no horizon.

"Don't seem t' recognize nothin'." "Mebbe she's got a fever," suggested the mate, rubbing his bristly chin.

"Fever nothin'! Not after bein' in th' water half an hour. Mebbe she hit one o' them wooden floats we left. Them dinged liners keep on crowdin' us," growled Barnes, with a fisherman's hate for the floating hotels. "Went by without a toot. See 'er, jes' like th' banker's wife goin' t' church on Sunday? A mile a minute; fog or no fog, it's all the same t' them. They run us down an' never What th' tarnation we goin' to do? She'll haff t' stay aboard till th' run is over. I can't afford t' yank

up my mudhook this time o' day." "Guess she can stand three 'r four days in our company, smellin' oilcloths, fish, kerosene, an' punk t'bac-

"If y' don't like th' kind o' t'bacco I buy buy your own. I ain't objectin'

The mate stepped over to the bunk and gingerly ran his hand over the girl's head. "Cod's whiskers, cap'n, they's a bump as big's a cork on th'



'The Poor Young Thing," Murmured Mrs. Barnes.

back o' her head! She's struck one o' them floats all right. Where's th'

Barnes turned to his locker and rummaged about, finally producing an ancient bottle and some passably clean cloth used frequently for bandages. Sometimes a man grew careless with his knife or got in the way of a pulley block. With blundering kindness the two men bound up the girl's head, and then went about their duties.

For three days Florence evinced not the slightest inclination to leave the bunk. She lay on her back either asleep or with her eyes staring at the beams above her head. She ate just enough to keep her alive; and the was a part of her inheritance, she than to make her wakeful. No one strong black coffee did nothing more knew what the matter was. There was. and leaped far out. As the great, dark, the bump, now diminished; but that puzzle. Had she ever seen the man ly move and his head buzzed abomitossing sea swooped up to meet her the bump, now diminished; but that she noted a block of wood bobbing up she noted a block of wood bobbing up state vastly puzzled the men. The state vastly puzzled the men. The some weapon of defense. He saw an analysis and down she tried to avoid it but state vastly puzzled the men. The same and down she tried to avoid it but state vastly puzzled the men. The same and down she tried to avoid it but state vastly puzzled the men. The same and down she tried to avoid it but state vastly puzzled the men. The same and down she tried to avoid it but state vastly puzzled the men. The same and down she tried to avoid it but state vastly puzzled the men. The same and down she tried to avoid it but state vastly puzzled the men. The same and down she tried to avoid it but state vastly puzzled the men. The same and down she tried to avoid it but state vastly puzzled the men. The same and down she tried to avoid it but state vastly puzzled the men. The same and down she tried to avoid it but state vastly puzzled the men. The same and down she tried to avoid it but state vastly puzzled the men. The same and th and down. She tried to avoid it, but truth is she had suffered a slight concelled not, and struck it head on. Decusion of the blow and the sheek of the spite the blow and the shock of the all the worry she had had for the last darkness which surrounded her men- er!" roared a voice down the comthe buoy. The wash from the mighty blankness of the mind.

The final cod was cleaned

and you, from one swirl to another, packed away in salt, the mudhook like a chip of wood. Then everything raised, and the schooner Betty set her salls for the southwest. Barnes realized that to save the girl she must have a doctor who knew his business Mrs. Barnes would know how to care for the girl, once she knew what the the liner and envying the ease and trouble was. There would be some news in the papers. A young and beautiful woman did not jump from a big Atlantic liner without the newspapers getting hold of the facts.

A fair wind carried the Betty into her haven, and shortly after Florence was sleeping peacefully in a feather bed, ancient, it is true, but none the less soft and inviting. In all this time she had not spoken a single word.

"The poor young thing!" murmured the motherly Mrs. Barnes. "What beautiful hair! O, John, I wish you would give up the sea. I hate it. It is terrible. I am always watching dropped a bolster 'r a piller over- you in my mind's eye, in calm weathboard. . . Cod's whiskers!" he er, in storms. Pieces of wrecks come ashore, and I always wonder over the death and terror back of them."

"Don't y' worry none about me Betty. I never take no chances. Now They's a woman in th' water out there. I'm goin' int' th' village an' bring I seen her leap th' rail. Look alive! back th' sawbones. He'll tell us what

The village doctor shook his grizzled head gravely.

"She's been hurt and shocked at the fore she comes around to herself. Just let her do as she pleases. Only keep to haul a body out of the sea, into an eye on her so that she doesn't wana dancing bobtailed dory, when one der off and get lost. I'll watch the moment it is climbing frantically heav- newspapers and if I come across anyenward and the next heading for the thing which bears upon the case I'll

But he searched the newspapers in vain, for the simple fact that he did The village took a good deal of interest in the affair. They gossiped the family story paper. She was a rich man's daughter; the ring on the unknown's finger would have fitted out

a whiff of the commissioner's carpet. dotted here and there by the schooners | Florence was soon able to walk All he could do was to give a good de- of the fleet, which seemed to be hang- about. Ordinary conversation she seemed to understand; but whenever the past was broached she would shake her head with frowning eyes. Her main diversion consisted of sitting on the sand dunes and gazing out at

> One day a stranger came to town. He said he represented a life insurance company and was up here from Boston to take a little vacation. He sat on the hotel porch that evening. surrounded by an admiring audience. The stranger had been all over the world, so it seemed. He spoke familiarly of St. Petersburg, Vladivostok. Shanghai, as the villagers-some of them-might have spoken of Boston. There were one or two old timers among the audience. They had been to all these parts. The stranger knew what he was telling about. After telling of his many voyages he asked if there was a good bathing beach nearby. He was told that he would find the most suitable spot near Captain Barnes' cottage just outside the vil-

"An' say, Mister, seen anythin' in th' papers about a missin' young woman?" asked some one.

"Missing young woman? What's The man told the story of Florence's leap into the sea and her subsequent

arrival at the cape. "That's funny," said the stranger. "I don't recollect reading about any young woman being lost at sea. But those big liners are always keeping such things under cover. Hoodoos the ship, they say, and turns prospective passengers to other lines. It hurts business. What's the young girl look

Florence was described minutely. The stranger teetered in his chair and smoked. Finally he spoke.

"She probably was insane. That's the way generally with insane people. They can't see water or look off a tall building without wanting to jump. My business is insurance, and we've got the thing figured pretty close to the ground. They used to get the best of us on the suicide game. A man would take out a large policy today and tomorrow he'd blow his head off, and we'd have to pay his wife. But nowadays a policy is not worth the paper it's written on if a man commits suicide under two

"You ain't tryin' to insure anybody in town, are you?" "Oh, no. No work for me when I'm on my vacation. Well, I'm going to bed; and tomorrow morning I'll go out to Captain Barnes' beach and have a good swim. I'm no sailor, but I like

He honestly enjoyed swimming. Early the next morning he was in the water, frolicking about as playfully as a boy. He had all the time in the world. Over his shoulder he saw two women wandering down toward the beach. Deeper he went, farther out. He was a bold swimmer, but that did not prevent a sudden and violent attack of cramps. And it was a rare piece of irony that the poor girl should save the life of that scoundrel who was without pity or mercy. As she saw his face a startled frown marred her brow. But she could not figure out the

The man thanked her feebly, but and not in his heart. When he had suffi- mured. He sat up and ran through hind his back.

ciently recovered he returned to the village and sought the railway station, made Braine furious. He reached where the Western Union had its of again for Florence.

"I want to send a code message to thority," growled Barnes. my firm. Do you think you can fol-

"I can try," said the operator. The code was really Slav; and when the long message was signed it was There's the door, mister." signed by the name Vroon.

The day after the news came that Florence had jumped overboard off man of peace, but there was a limit the banks, Vroon with a dozen other to his patience. He seized Braine by men had started out to comb all the the shoulders and hustled him out of fishing villages along the New Eng- the house. land coast. Somewhere along the way he felt confident that he would learn nothin' more'll be said; but till y' whether the girl was dead or alive. If she was dead then the game was a tage. draw, but if she was alive there was still a fighting chance for the Black Hundred. He had had some idea of re- ter. maining in the village and accomplishing the work himself; but after deliberation he concluded that it was im- his night's rest. Quite naturally, he portant enough for Braine himself to



Braine Took Florence Aboard the Chartered Yacht.

take a hand in. So the following night he departed for Boston, from there to New York. He proceeded at once to the apartment of the princess, where Braine declared that he himself would go to the obscure village and claim Florence as his own child. But to the innocent. insure absolute success they would charter Morse's yacht and steam right up into the primitive harbor.

When Vroon left the apartment Norton saw him. He was a man of impulses, and he had found by experience that first impulses are generally the best. He did not know who Vroon was. Any man who called on the Princess Perigoff while Braine was with her would be worth following.

On the other hand, Vroon recognized the reporter instantly and with that ever-ready and alert mind of his set about to lure the young man into a trap out of which he might not easily

Norton decided to follow his man. He might be going on a wild-goose chase, he reasoned; still his first impulses had hitherto served him well. He looked careworn. He was convinced that Florence was dead, despite the assertions of Jones to the contrary. He had gone over all the mishaps which had taken place and he was now absolutely convinced that his whilom friend Braine and the Princess Perigoff were directly concerned. Florence had either been going to or coming from the apartment. And that memorable day of the abduction the princess had been in the dry goods

Vroon took a downtown surface car, and Norton took the same. He sat huddled in a corner, never suspecting that Vroon was watching him from a corner of his eye. Norton was not keen today. The thought of Florence kept running through his head.

The car stopped and Vroon got off. He led Norton a winding course which at length ended at the door of a tenement building. Vroon entered. Norton paused, wondering what next to do, now that his man had reached his destination. Well, since he had followed him all this distance he must make an effort to find out who he was and what he was going to do. Cautiously he entered the hallway. As he was about to lay his hand on the of mystery. newel post of the dilapidated stairs the floor dropped from under his feet and he was precipitated into the cellar. This tenement belonged to the

Black Hundred; it concealed a thousand doors and a hundred traps. Its history was as dark as its hallways. When Vroon and his companion, who had been waiting for him, descended into the cellar they found the

reporter insensible. They bound, blindfolded, and gagged him quickly. "Saunders," said Vroon, "you tell Corrigan that I've a sailor for him tonight, and that I want this sailor booked for somewhere south of the equator. Tell him to say to the master that this fellow is ugly and disobedient. A tramp freighter, whose

"I get you. But there's no need to go to Corrigan this trip. Bannock is than life!" in port and sails tonight for Norway. That's far enough."

captain is a bully. Do you understand

"Bannock? The very man. Well, yet?" Mr. Norton, reporter and amateur ietective, I guess we've got you fast enough this time. You may or may not come back alive. Go and bring around a taxi; some one you can trust. I'll dope the reporter while Long hours afterward Norton

opened his aching eyes. He could hard-"Come out o' that now, ye skulk-

panionway. "Shanghaied!" the reporter mur-

"Clear out o' here, 'r show your au-"She goes with me, or you'll regret it."

"All right. But I guess th' law won't hurt me none. I'm in my rights. "I refuse to go without her!"

Barnes sighed. He was on land a

"Bring your proofs, mister, an'

bring 'em, keep away from this cot-And, simple-minded sailor that he was, he thought this settled the mat-

That night he kept his ears open for unusual sounds, but he merely wasted reckoned that the stranger would make his attempt at night. Indeed, he made it in broad daylight, with Barnes not a hundred yards away, calking a dory whose seams had sprung aleak. Braine had Florence upon the chartered yacht before the old man realized what had happened. | do?" He never saw Florence again; but one day, months later, he read all about her in a newspaper.

Florence fought; but she was weak, and so the conquest was easy. Braine | the spanner first." was kind enough, now that he had her safe. He talked to her, but she merely stared at the receding coast. and crushed him to the floor, wrench-"All right; don't talk if you don't ing away the spanner. Then the giant her father. I got skinned out of a want to. Here," to one of the men, took Norton by the scruff of his neck sloop once because I took a man's "take her to the cabin and keep her and banged him up the steps to the word at its face value. Black an there. But don't you touch her. I'll deck. break you if you do. Put her in the cabin and guard the door; at least show ye that no spanner ever bothered thing," protested Braine, beginning keep an eye on it. She may take it Mike Bannock. Now, d' know what to lose his patience. "I can't risk into her head to jump overboard."

Even the temporarily demented are not without a species of cunning. Florence had never seen Braine till he appeared at the Barnes cottage. Yet she revolted at the touch of his hand. On the second day out toward New York she found a box of matches and blithely set fire to her cabin, walked out into the corridor and thence to the deck. When the fire was discovered it had gained too much headway to be stopped. The yacht was doomed. They put off in the boats and for half a day drifted helplessly.

Fate has everything mapped out like a game of chess. You move a pawn, and bang goes your bishop, or your knight, or your king; or she lets you almost win a game, and then checkmates you. But there is one thing to be said in her favor-rail at her how we will, she is always giving odds to

Mike Bannock was in the pilothouse, looking over his charts, when the lookboats adrift off the port bow, sir!" And Bannock, who was a first-class sailor, although a rough one, shouted down the tube to the engine room. The freighter came to a halt in about ten minutes. The castaways saw that they had been noted, and pulled gallantly at the oars.

There are some things which science, well advanced as it is, cannot explain. Among them is the shock which cuts off the past and the countershock which reawakens memory. They may write treatise after treatise and expound, but they never succeed



"Girl, I Love You Better Than Life."

in truly getting beyond that dark wall At the sound of Jim Norton's voice

and at the sight of his face-for subconsciously she must have been thinking of him all the while-a great blinding heat-wave seemed to burn across her eyes, and when the effect passed away she was herself again. A wild glance at her surroundings convinced her that both she and her lover were in danger. "Keep back," whispered Jim. "Don't

recognize me." "They believe that I've lost my mind, and I'll keep that idea in their heads. Sometime tonight I'll find a

It took a good deal of cautious maneuvering to bring about the meeting. "They shanghied me. And I thought you dead! It was all wrong. It was a trick of that Perigoff woman, and it succeeded. Girl, girl, I love you better "I know it now," she said, and she

kissed him. "Has my father appeared

"Do you know anything at all about him?" sadly. nis pockets. Not a sou-markee, not a

match even; and a second glance told him that the clothes he wore were not his own. "They've landed me this time. Shanghaied! What the devil am I going to do?" "D'ye hear me?" bawled the stri-

engineer's spanner on the floor by the bunk across the way, and with no small physical effort he succeeded in obtaining it. He stood up, his hand be-

"All right, me bucko! I'll come down an' git ve!"

A pair of enormous boots began cheerful. But a vague hope awoke in to appear down the companionway, his heart. If they were still after him and there gradually rose up from might it not signify that Florence them a man as wide as a church door | lived. and as deep as a well.

"Wait a moment," said Norton, grip- According to Vroon the girl's memory ping the spanner. "Let us have a per- was in bad shape; so he had not the fect understanding right off the bat." least doubt of bringing her back to "We're going t' have it, matey. New York without mishap. Once he

Don't ye worry none." Norton raised the spanner, and, in earnest. He played his cards ex-

dizzy as he was, faced this seafaring ceedingly well. Steaming up into the Hercules courageously. "I've been shanghaied, and you yacht in itself would allay any dis-

know it. Where are we bound?" "Copenhagen." "Well, for a month or more you'll beat me up whenever the opportunity She gave a startled cry and ran over offers. But I merely wish to warn you

that if you do you'll find a heap of trou-

ble waiting for you the next time you

drop your mudhook in North Amer-"Is that so?" said the giant, eying the spanner and the shaking hand that

it is your father?" Braine turned to held it aloft. "It is, I'll take your orders and do the captain. "She has been like this the best I can, because you've got the for a year. Heaven knows if she'll apper hand. But, God is witness, ever be in her right mind again." you'll pay for every needless blow you sadly. "I was giving her an ocean strike. Now what do you want me to voyage, with the kindest nurses possible, and yet she jumped overboard.

"Lay down that spanner an' come Come, Florence." on deck, I'll tell ye what t' do. I was goin' t' whale th' daylights out o' ye; tighter around Barnes' neck t t ye're somethin' av a man. Drop

Norton hesitated. As lithe as a ti- thet she's your daughter?" ger the bulk of a man sprang at him

"I ain't goin' t' hurt ye. I hac t'

a cook's galley is?" "I do," said Norton, breathing hard. She is my daughter, and you will find "Well, hike there an' start in with it will not pay to take this peculiar peelin' spuds, an' don't waste 'em stand." neither. That'll be all fer th' present. "In black an' white, 'r y' can't have Ye were due for a wallopin' but I her." kinda like yer spunk."

Braine thereupon rushed forward to So Jim stumbled down to the cook's seize Florence. Barnes swung Florgallery and grimly set to work at the ence behind him. potatoes. It might have been far "I guess she'll stay here a leetle worse. But here he was, likely to be longer, sir." on the high seas for months, and no Time was vital, and this obstinacy,

s notifying Jones what had hap-

pened. The outlook was anything but

Meantime Braine had not been idle.

had her there the game would begin

little fishing harbor with a handsome

trust. And he wore a capital disguise,

too. Everything went well till he

laid his hand on Florence's shoulder.

"Now what, my child?" asked the

She shook her head. Her aversion

"Come, my dear; can't you see that

The girl wrapped her arms all the

An idea came into the old sailor's

head. "Of course, sir, y've got proof

"Proof?" Braine was taken aback.

"Yes; somethin' t' prove that you're

white, an' on paper, says I, hereafter."

sending to New York for documents.

"But I never thought of such a

to Barnes, clinging to him wildly.

"No, no!" she cried.

was inexplicable.

sailor.

(To be Continued in The Climax-Madisonian Wednesday, Oct. 14

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